

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

A GENERAL court was held on Thursday, last inst., at the Sewers Court, Greek-street, Soho-square. Lord Ebrington, M.P., in the chair.

The Metropolitan Sewerage Manure Company.—In answer to an application made by Dr. Guy, and a deputation, on behalf of the Metropolitan Sewerage Manure Company, a resolution was passed to the effect that, as soon as arrangements were completed, the company would be permitted to take the sewage water from the Coopers Creek sewer for agricultural purposes, for a certain specific time.

A recommendation was received from the general committee, that it would be desirable to continue Mr. Roe as the consulting surveyor of this commission, at a salary of 200*l.* per annum, such amount at the end of the first year to be further considered. Mr. Hale was also appointed assistant surveyor at a salary of 200*l.*

Regulation of Business of the Commission.—A paper of suggestions, drawn up by Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Bullar, for the regulation of the business of the Consolidated Commission, was laid before the court, but no decision upon it was come to. Among the matters of most immediately pressing importance, the following works are recommended:—

1. The scale and details of the survey map.
2. Street cleansing.
3. The manufacture of pipes, and provision of materials.
4. The house drainage report and plan.
5. The Westminster general drainage reports and plans.
6. The load drainage report and plans.

Street Cleansing by Hose and Jet.—A report by the assistant surveyor, on the subject of a variety of experiments in street cleansing by the use of hose and jet, set forth that many of the streets and courts in which these experiments were performed, were, before cleansing, in a most filthy and insalubrious condition, the surface coated with mud, and strewn with offal and refuse of the most disgusting nature; in the interstices between the paving, and in the hollows formed by its partial settlement, stagnant fetid liquids had collected, charging the atmosphere with their offensive exhalations. The calculation made for the Strand is, that the whole of the carriage and footways should be daily cleansed thoroughly for 4*½**d.* per house per week, including the courts adjacent thereto; and for the borough of Southwark, at 3*½**d.* per house per week. According to this plan, taking the number of houses in London at 270,000, and the carriage-way to each house at 27*½* square yards, equal to a total of 7,500,000 square yards; assuming this to be a paved surface, the cost of its application daily (carriage-way and foot-way), would be 93,414*l.* per annum; while under the present process of merely sweeping, the cost would be 171,804*l.* per annum.

Miscellaneous.

THE ARUNDEL SOCIETY.—Under this title a "Society for promoting the Knowledge of Art," has been established for the publication, to annual subscribers of one guinea, of translations of foreign works, or original essays, illustrating the principles or the history of art, and engravings from important examples of architecture, painting, &c. The prospectus says,—"The machinery which has proved so effective in the cultivation of literature, science, and archaeology, has hitherto been employed only to a limited extent in promoting the knowledge of art. The productions, indeed, of ancient Greece and her colonies, their edifices and their sculpture, have been illustrated by the labours of the Dilettanti Society; and recently much light has been thrown upon mediæval architecture through means of the numerous institutions devoted exclusively to its elucidation. But no such body has hitherto attempted the systematic study of the monuments of painting, nor of the various ornamental arts in which the middle ages were so eminently successful; nor has any undertaken the investigation of the theoretic principles common to all branches of art, by which its efforts should ever be guided, and its achievements judged." The council includes some good names, but will need an infusion of working men.

LEAMINGTON CHURCH CLOCK.—A clock has been placed in the tower of the parish church: the dials, 7 feet diameter, of masonry coated with mastic, are painted purple, and have the surface "enameled," as it is termed, that is, strewn with pulverised or fragmentary glass. The figures, 15 inches in height, are gilt.

CALIFORNIA AND THE GOLD DIGGINGS.

—We have purposely avoided reference to the gold finders till now, having a natural suspicion that the extraordinary statements on the subject which have been flying over the country, were exaggerations that succeeding accounts would correct. Nothing, however, has yet occurred to confirm the misgiving, and we must be contented to believe and wonder. Mr. Wyld has published a map of the gold regions, and some "Geographical and Mineralogical Notes" to accompany it. Baily, Brothers, have issued all the information they could rake together, under the title of "The Gold Regions of California;" and now even so staid and steady a writer as Professor Ansted is carried off by the prevailing current, and has published "The Gold Seeker's Manual," which even those who do not propose to give up kid gloves and take in "washing" at California may peruse with advantage. Mr. Ansted does not think that the quantity of the precious metals will be sufficiently great to alter permanently their value. A stimulus will be given to industry, new markets will be opened, and, unless we are deceived, England will be more benefited in the long run by this discovery than America. The *Liverpool Albion* says that Messrs. Starkey, requiring a place to store goods in now going to California, arranged to send one out. A contract was consequently made with Messrs. Vernon for one to be built of iron, under the directions of Mr. Grantham, civil engineer. The warehouse is of iron, and the roof is similar to those used at railway stations. The sides and roof are thin, covered with galvanized corrugated iron plates. There are large folding-doors in the centre, and windows in the roof. The order was given on the 5th ult., and the men were fairly at work on the 9th; and on Saturday, the 3rd inst., it was entirely erected and ready to be taken down, having been constructed in the short space of twenty-three working days.

ELASTIC MOULDS.—At the Sheffield School of Design, last week, Mr. Young Mitchell, the master, gave a lecture, illustrated by experiments, on the art of making elastic moulds. These seem to have great advantages over the old plan. The moulds may be made at small cost, and with great rapidity. That which would occupy five or six days in the modelling, may be furnished by this process in half that number of hours. The principal material used for the elastic moulds is glue or gelatine. The best fish glue will answer as well as gelatine, and is much cheaper. The material is dissolved like glue, in a vessel placed over the fire in a pot of hot water, stirring it during the process. To each pound of the gelatine it is necessary to add three quarters of a pint of water and half an ounce of bees' wax. It is ready for use when about the thickness of syrup. The model must be oiled carefully with sweet oil, and the composition must be poured upon it while warm, but not boiling. Having set, it may be taken off the model. When the model is small it should be placed in a shoe or case, which gives facility for shaking the mould well when the plaster is poured in, so as to drive it well into the crevices. The plaster should be fine, and in order that it may harden and set quickly, about half an ounce of alum should be added to each pint of water, used in mixing it. Before using the mould it should be carefully oiled. Great care is required in mixing the plaster, and watching it when in the mould, for if it be allowed to remain long enough to heat, the mould is destroyed.

HINT TO DUNDEE.—Sir: Having remarked, in your valuable periodical, advertisements for designs for a memorial to be erected on the quay of Dundee, to celebrate the landing of her Majesty there, I beg to suggest to the respected inhabitants of that flourishing town that it would be much more to their convenience, much more to their health, and much more to their credit, were they, in lieu thereof, to employ their spare cash in draining their town (an operation which is very much required), and erecting certain conveniences in a more decent manner, especially as the amount they propose to spend is but a tithe of what would be required to erect a monument of the magnitude proposed, or of the style which the occasion deserves.—ONE WHO HAS USED HIS OLFACTORES.

* Van Voort, Palembouter-rou.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.—A new, and it is thought, improved patent express locomotive engine has recently been manufactured by Messrs. R. Stephenson and Co., and placed on the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway. Its driving-wheels are 6 feet 6 inches in diameter. A single stroke covers nearly seven yards in length, and the rate of speed has been found to be nearly a mile a minute. In the formation of a locomotive, there are 5,416 pieces to be put together and adjusted as accurately as the works of a watch. A "pit lad" at Killingworth colliery, ambitious, no doubt, to sustain the renown of that nursery of a Stephenson's genius, has invented an apparatus for working railway breaks and preventing collisions, which the *Gateshead Observer*, who patronises the meritorious object of the inventor in providing for the public safety, describes as a substitute for the screw and lever either on tenders or on carriages. By this apparatus, each carriage being provided with a piece of cord the length of itself, having a hook at one end and a loop at the other, a whole train can be placed at the command of the engine-driver as well as of the guard, and if on the tender, it would also work the break of the engine. Every wheel could thus be locked in a moment if necessary, the apparatus exerting a retarding power six times greater than that of the ordinary break, although costing but a trifle more. The last annual report of the Railway Mechanics' Institution, at Rugby, states that there are seventy-six members, that the library contains 260 volumes of useful works, besides 100 more to be added, and that twelve lectures are delivered half-yearly, on instructive and mechanical subjects. The Great Western works, from Slough to Windsor, are in rapid progress. "There seems a fatality," says the *Railway Record*, "attending the endeavours of the Great Western contractors under Mr. Brunel, to obtain an adjustment of their transactions with the railway companies. Mr. Nixon, in respect of his 'contract' works, and other or 'extra' works, for the Taff Vale Company, many years since, claiming a balance of 9,000*l.*, has just been told by the Court of Chancery, that his remedy is at law, and not in equity; but this decision has been delayed so long, as to deprive him of that legal remedy. Mr. McIntosh's executors, after five years' litigation at law and in equity, have lately resorted to a court of equity to take the accounts of works in respect of which half a million is claimed against the Great Western. Mr. Ranger resorted to the same tribunal, eleven years ago, against the same company, and has not yet learnt where his accounts are to be taken. The London and North-Western sent their account with Mr. Burton to an accountant last year; and the result is, that the whole has been adjusted! The Manchester and Southampton sent their engineering accounts with Mr. Freebody to a referee, not a lawyer, and the result was equally favourable."

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—We are glad to see that Mr. Ewart is about to move for a select committee upon the public libraries of Great Britain and Ireland, with the view of securing means for their improvement and extension.

SPLITTING BANK NOTES.—Mr. Editor: Knowing you to be a firm friend to the working class, induces me to trouble you with this statement, that the process of splitting a bank note, or any other piece of paper, is the invention of a person, a print-ammer, who was induced to try the experiment to obtain the engraving from one of the illustrated papers without the letter-press showing through from the other side. The experiment of splitting a note was first tried at the house of Mr. Anderson, the George Tavern, Lambeth-walk (or at least for him) my friend for troubling you with this is, that the world may know that a working man is the originator of the above invention, which is the result of ten years' study.—A WORKING MAN.

A contemporary gives the following mode for splitting paper:—Procure two rollers or cylinders of glass, or amber resin, or metallic amalgam; strongly excite them by the well-known means, so as to produce the attraction of cohesion, and then with pressure pass the paper between the rollers. One half will adhere to the under roller, and the other to the upper roller, and the split will be perfect. Cease the excitation and remove each part.